



Laura Leigh Brakke, one of only three certified nurse-midwives in the county, monitors a patient.

3 nurse-midwives deliver professional, caring touch

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Deseret News correspondent

PROVO — Four years ago LaRita Evans made Utah County history when she hung out her shingle as a certified nurse-midwife, the county's first.

Ms. Evans and her two partners, Laura Leigh Brakke and Mary Ross, deliver about 275 babies each year.

"I think our practice could be bigger if we were allowed to advertise," said Ms. Evans regretfully.

Regardless, she said almost every obstetrical practice in the valley is down an estimated 40 percent, possibly due to the economy.

Although the three women are still Utah County's only certified nurse-midwives, the number of lay midwives has multiplied rapidly in the past four years — which distresses the certified nurse-midwives.

While a nurse-midwife must undergo five to seven years of training at an accredited institution, a lay midwife often has little or no official schooling.

"Just as the physicians are afraid I'm going to miss something vital while caring for my patients, I'm afraid these lay midwives are going to miss something," said Ms. Evans, who said the situation is a sort of an obstetrical pecking order.

"It's a concern to us," agreed Miss Brakke. "We really don't want to be to the lay midwives what the physicians are to us."

She said some people suggest certified nurse-midwives should join with lay midwives to lobby politically for their cause. But she said the certified midwives consider formal education essential preparation for the practice of medicine.

The cost for prenatal care and delivery with a nurse-midwife is \$550, which is about the same price currently being charged by a local family practitioner, and about \$100 less than an obstetrician.

But while their prices are comparable, the women claim their care is superior to a physician, because the midwife spends a great deal of time chatting and answering questions during the pregnancy and stays with the delivering mother throughout labor. As an additional security measure, they employ the services of two back-up obstetricians.

According to Miss Brakke, there are some women who simply can't deal with a male physician, or perhaps their husband won't allow them to see one.

"Physicians have not had more training in normal births," emphasized Ms. Evans, "although they have had more training in high-risk births."

One misconception is that certified nurse-midwives do not allow a woman to use anesthetics during delivery.

"Another misconception," said Ms. Evans, "is that the more you pay, the more you get. That isn't always the case."

The nurse-midwives would like to say more, but they are nervous. They explain that as much as they don't like to admit it, the physicians have a certain amount of power over them.

The midwives must depend upon the physicians' good will to vote them hospital privileges. In addition, a pediatrician may refuse to see the babies the midwives have delivered, and finally, their back-up obstetricians could get their malpractice insurance taken away for practicing with a midwife on the assumption they must be running a higher risk.

"Midwives in other states have been destroyed by this sort of thing," said Miss Brakke, "although it was later ruled a restraint of trade by the courts."

Still, it's evident the women would like to maintain an amicable relationship with physicians.

"In the past four years we've developed a good track record," said Ms. Evans proudly. "We've never had a problem get so far out of control that our back-up physician couldn't handle it. Our doctors are very appreciative of this."

County Sports

Tuesday, May 1, 1

Bruins are out

Fight blahs by taking in baseball card show

The bad weather is starting to get a lot of people down and the forecast for the month of May is anything but bright; more rain, more clouds, more cold temperatures. Or in other words: more yuck.

But in the midst of all the bad news about the weather, there is something Utah County sports enthusiasts can do this coming weekend to fight the blahs. How about taking in a baseball card show. A baseball card show you ask? How can baseball cards put on a show?

Good question. The answer of course is that the cards can't actually put on the show, but the Baseball Card Shop of Salt Lake and the Baseball Card Shop and Comics Too of Provo can and they will, Saturday at Westminster College. The second annual Utah show will feature cards and collectibles from the grand old game and for a coverage charge of \$1.50 anyone can go in and look, dicker and even buy if the mood hits him.

The uniforms of former major league stars such as Lou Brock, Willie Mays and Bob Gibson as well as that of Ty Cobb nemesis Pete Rose, will be on display. A baseball autographed by the one and only Babe Ruth will be on exhibit. There will be world series bats and rings, old sports publications and photographs.



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If you're not thrilled over the idea of spending the afternoon browsing at baseball cards, you can pick up free souvenirs from representatives of the Utah Jazz, the Golden Eagles and the Gulls, who will also be on hand to answer questions about their teams and players. This year's show has lured the likes of Will Davis, one of California's biggest collector/dealers.

TURNING TO THE SPORT OF BASEBALL. Last Friday was a decisive day in Region 8 baseball. Both for Payson and Springville it was do or die, and more so for the Lions. The two teams were in a hotly contested battle for third place in the region and the right to play off with Cedar City for a state tournament berth.

PHOTOGRAPHY/GARY MCKELLAR

ball against Provo Monday. The T-Birds edged the Bulldogs, 2-1.